



News Release

For Immediate Release:

November 30, 2005

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Utah AWARE Renews Campaign Stressing Proper Antibiotic Use

(Salt Lake City, UT) – Utah AWARE, the Utah Alliance Working for Antibiotic Resistance Education, launched its 2005/2006 education campaign today stating it will refocus this year's efforts to prevent the resistance of bacteria to antibiotics through community education about appropriate antibiotic use.

Antibiotic resistance awareness, "*Use the Right Drug for the Right Drug*" continues to be AWARE's key message to the public and health care providers. Resistant bacteria are germs that are not killed by usual doses of antibiotics and emerge because of antibiotic misuse or overuse. "There are very few new antibiotics being created or tested right now," says H. Eric Cannon, PharmD, Director of Pharmacy Services at IHC Health Plans. "For the next five or 10 years, we may not see new or better antibiotics to handle resistant bacteria. That's why it's so vital to prevent the increasing resistance of bacteria to antibiotics through community education about appropriate antibiotic use."

The recent rise in pertussis (whooping cough) cases in Utah was cited as an example of why using the right drug for the right bug is so important. "Pertussis cases in Utah have more than doubled," says Bob Bunnell, PA, a local Physician's Assistant who will help spearhead Utah AWARE's efforts this year. "Because pertussis can have symptoms very similar to the common cold, it is important to see your provider to decide the best treatment for your illness."

This year AWARE hopes to further its goals through various education efforts, including a statewide coloring contest announced by First Lady Mary Kaye Huntsman. The contest,

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open to all children 12 years and under, will reinforce hand washing as one of the best ways to prevent illness. The contest grand prize is a trip for four to Disneyland.

“Hand washing is an important life skill to teach children to reduce the spread of colds, influenza and other viruses, for which antibiotics are useless,” says Mrs. Huntsman.

Utah AWARE is a coalition of health care providers, insurers, pharmaceutical manufacturers, the Utah Medical Association (UMA) and the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) that have joined forces to educate the public about the alarming increase of antibiotic resistance in Utah. Each year, Utah AWARE distributes cough and cold kits to health care provider offices. Providers give the kits containing over-the-counter cold medicine and tissues to patients who come in for viral infections that do not require antibiotics. More than 5,000 kits have already been distributed this year alone.

AWARE also provides educational assemblies for elementary schools free of charge. The campaign will continue to promote the “*Use the Right Drug for the Right Bug!*” message using radio and television as well.

AWARE suggests the following to prevent antibiotic-resistant infections:

- Do not take antibiotics for viral infections like the cold or the flu.
- Talk with your health care provider about antibiotic resistance.
- Ask whether an antibiotic will help improve your illness.
- Use over-the-counter medicines like decongestants, cough-syrups and pain relievers to reduce symptoms.
- Do not save antibiotics for the next time you get sick – complete the entire course as directed.
- Do not share antibiotics or use an antibiotic that is prescribed for someone else.

For more information about antibiotic resistance, visit www.utahaware.com

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